



# Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilot

## *State of Illinois*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA Region 5 selected the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) for a Regional Brownfields Pilot. The Pilot will support environmental assessments at brownfields throughout the State. A number of the sites identified to date cover approximately 7-10 acres and were used previously for industry, including former steel fabrication plants, a former textile mill, stockyard facilities, and sites associated with former Pullman Car works. Future uses of the sites range from a recycling center to parks and a marina. Many of the sites are located in or near communities populated largely by minorities and economically disadvantaged groups. Approximately 2/3 of the resources to date have been allocated for the sites in Chicago, with the remaining monies earmarked for East St. Louis and other downstate communities.

### OBJECTIVES

IEPA's objective is to work with selected communities to facilitate the reintroduction of brownfields into the real estate market. Current market trends in the State indicate that, prospective purchasers are unwilling to assume the risk of accruing undetermined future costs to clean up possible contamination at these sites. Because the cost of conducting a private environmental assessment is prohibitively high, the sites remain unused. IEPA anticipates that information

#### PILOT SNAPSHOT



State of Illinois

**Date of Award:**  
September 1995

**Amount:** \$150,000

**Site Profile:** The Pilot targets several sites for environmental assessments including former steel fabrication, stockyard, and former Pullman Car works facilities, which are located throughout the State, including Chicago, East St. Louis, and other downstate communities.

#### Contacts:

Larry Eastep  
Illinois EPA  
(217) 782-6760

Tom Crause  
Illinois EPA  
(217) 782-6760

Joe Dufficy  
U.S. EPA - Region 5  
(312) 886-1960  
dufficy.joe@epamail.epa.gov

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from the site assessments will enable prospective purchasers to quantify their potential liability accurately and encourage them to consider purchasing these sites for productive use.

- EPA Region 5 has monitored the success of IEPA's program over the last several years, and has augmented the initial Pilot funding with monies from the Superfund Site Assessment Program consistent with other program demands.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Pilot has:

- Identified potential sites throughout the State for environmental site assessments and redevelopment. As a result, a list of brownfields sites eligible for potential assistance under the Pilot was developed;
- Determined relevant selection criteria and selected 17 sites for further action. In 1995, three Chicago sites were selected. In 1996, two West Central Municipal Conference (Cook County) sites, one Marshall County site, and four St. Clair County sites were selected. In 1997, three Lake County sites were selected while Clark County, Rock Island County, Winnebago County, and Marshall County each had one site selected; and
- Out of the 17 sites described above, completed 11 site assessments to date.

The Pilot is:

- Conducting 6 site assessments at the remaining priority sites.

## **LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Experience with the State of Illinois Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- IEPA anticipates that, because the redevelopment of these sites is of substantial economic importance, city officials have become more involved in facilitating any prospective purchases or redevelopment and will convey information from the environmental assessment to the prospective purchasers.
- The City of Chicago is establishing a database that will track the results of environmental site assessments conducted throughout Chicago.